World Jewish Congress 3/97

lished by the Swiss Federal government and the country's three major banks.

REFUSAL

At the invitation of Germany's Jewish community, Jan Karski, a World War II Polish resistance fighter, has visited Germany after refusing to do so for the past five decades.

Karski, who has been honored by Israel as a Righteous Gentile, provided the World War II Allies with the first reliable eyewitness report of the Holocaust while the crime was going on. But his pleas to step up efforts to help Jews escape from Nazi-controlled territories and for the bombing of Germany in reprisal for the mass murder were ignored by the U.S. and Britain.

INDENTIFICATION

France has announced the formation of a committee to identify property stolen from Jews during World War II.

The property is believed to include 2,000 works of art, among them priceless items by Gauguin, Renoir and Rodin, currently in French museums.

EUROPE

MILLENNIUM

For a Catholic Jubilee called for the year 2000, the Vatican has appointed a Theological Commission to investigate the persecution of victims by the Spanish Inquisition for being Jews and Moslems, to examine the conduct and attitudes of the Catholic Church towards Jews during the Holocaust and to prepare a report on the historic anti-Semitism of the Church.

The Commission's work will be directed towards a conference on anti-Semitism which is planned for Autumn 1997.

BACKWARDS

The fundamentalist monks of Le Barroux Monastery in France have decided to restore to the liturgy of the Good Friday service a prayer which contains the ancient reference to "perfidious Jews."

In addition, the monastery's library has put on sale a special book bearing the title "For the Conversion of the Jews."

DEMONSTRATION

Four thousand demonstrators have marched to protest a decision by Toulon's ultra-right National Front mayor to fire prominent theater director Gerard Paquet over a matter of theater programming.

The hostility of the mayor to Paquet originated with Paquet's outspoken criticism of the mayor's decision to veto a literary tribute to Jewish author Marek Halter. The mayor said that Halter was an unsuitable candidate for the award because he was an advocate of immigration and cultural pluralism.

JEWISH COURSE

The Modern University of Lisbon, Portugal, has introduced a course on Jewish religion and culture.

Similar courses are planned at the Universities of Beja, Porto and Setubal.